

INFORMATION REPORT

CD NO.

COUNTRY • Morocco

DATE DISTR 18 SEP 50

SUBJECT Shift in Policy of French and Spanish Zone Nationalists

NO. OF PAGES 2

PLACE
ACQUIRED

NO. OF ENCLS.
(LISTED BELOW)

DATE OF INFO.

25X1A
SUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

3. From 17 to 20 August 1950, the Isha (Reform) Party of Spanish Morocco and the Istiqlal (Independence) Party of French Morocco held meetings for the purpose of delineating a revised common policy.
2. The position of the Isha Party leaders has been moderate. They favor an approach to the Spanish and French Governments patterned after the original Seven-Point program of Habib Bourguiba, head of the Neo-Destour (New-Constitution) Party in Tunisia. The Isha leaders do not believe that a demand for immediate independence is realistic and favor instead the creation of governments in the Spanish and French Zones with true Nationalist representation, a program of social and educational reforms, and a degree of autonomy for the immediate future, with the assurance from the Spanish and French that full independence is to be granted within a reasonable time.
3. The position of the Istiqlal Party has been more intransigent. It is committed to a program for complete and immediate independence and any reversal of this policy, in the opinion of the Istiqlal leaders, would result in a serious split. Mohamed ben Abdullah Allal el Fassi, Ahmed ben Abdeslam Balafrej, Mohamed Lyazidi, Ali ben Abderahmen Bargash and Mohamed ben Mohamed Ghazi (or Rhazi) are all convinced that a more moderate attitude, as advocated by the Isha Party, would be more likely to receive the support of the United States.* They also feel that such a policy might prove acceptable to the French Government which, they realize, would not consider demands for complete independence.
4. Mohamed el Fassi expressed his regret to source that the Shoura (Democratic) Party is weak and has several unreliable leaders. El Fassi stated that, if the Shoura Party were stronger, the Istiqlal Party could secretly support Mohamed Hassan al Ouazzani (Wazzani), whose moderate attitude has been demonstrated in the past. If such a maneuver were possible, a majority of the Istiqlal rank-and-file members and some of the leaders could join the Shoura, leaving those Istiqlal leaders who are committed to an extreme policy in a position to continue to work for the ultimate aims of Moroccan Nationalism. El Fassi said that such a situation exists in Tunisia, where the nearly equal strength of the Neo and Old Destour Parties makes it possible for one party to maintain the extreme position without closing the door to compromise between the French and the moderate party.

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Next Review Date: 09/09/2024

Document No. 5

No Change in Status

☒ Realized

Class. On

Auth.: 73.2

Date: 0 JUL 1978

By: 28

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5. Further discussions held between representatives of the Islah and Istiqlal Parties resulted, on 21 August 1950, in the complete acceptance of the Islah Party position. El Fassi, presumably with the concurrence of the Istiqlal leaders in the French Zone, agreed to abandon secretly the present extremist position and work toward an agreement with the French on the basis of the program presented by Mohamed Hassan el Ouazzani to the French Residency in September 1947, on condition, however, that this policy not be labelled as the "Ouazzani Program," and that any overtures appear to originate with the French.
6. In order to avoid a split in the Istiqlal Party, the top leaders will designate as negotiators secondary Party figures who never openly have espoused the extreme position. These negotiators will receive the complete but secret support of the top Istiqlal leaders, who still will be able to sponsor an extremist program while working in fact toward a moderate position.

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[REDACTED] The plan to reorient the joint Islah-Istiqlal policy toward a more moderate position was brought about partly as a result of a letter to the Islah Party from El Abed Bouhafa, the UN correspondent of Al-Misri and the New York representative of the North African Committee of Liberation. Bouhafa said that, because of the strategic importance of this area, the United States is implementing a new policy with regard to French North Africa. Two features of this policy are the industrial development of the area and the placing of pressure on the French (and eventually on the Spanish) to bring about an agreement with the Nationalists. Bouhafa attributed the recent changes in the government of Tunisia to this policy.

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